A Theological Diſcourſe OF LAST WILLS AND Teſtaments.

By WILLIAM ASSHETON, D.D. Rector of *Beckenham* in *Kent*, and Chaplain to His *Grace* the Duke of *ORMOND*.

Set thine houſe in order, for thou ſhalt Die and not Live. Iſaiah 31. 1.

But men ſhould often be put in remembrance to take Order for the ſettling of their Temporal Eſtates, whilſt they are in health.

The Miniſter ſhould not omit earneſtly to move ſuch ſick Perſons as are of Ability, to be liberal to the Poor. V. Rubr. in the Order for the Viſit. of the Sick.

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To the Illuſtrious His Grace,

JAMES

Duke of ORMOND,

Chancellor of the Univerſities of OXFORD and DUBLIN, Knight of the moſt Noble Order of the Garter, *&c.*

May it pleaſe Your Grace,

HAving *formerly Publiſhed*, A Plain Method of Daily Devotions *and* Devotions for the Lord's-Day, *for the uſe of a*

Countrey-Pariſh; as a further inſtance of my Duty, in inſtructing Thoſe committed to my charge, I thought it might be uſeful, in the ſame familiar manner, to give ſome Direction and Aſſiſtance to Sick *and* Dying Perſons. *And though ſome able Pens have lately engaged in that Subject (and conſequently leſs need of any Compoſure of mine) yet the Providence of God having Placed me amongſt a Plain working People, who do not much converſe with Books, ſome ſhort Manual of my own, when put into their hands, would be accepted and peruſed, and through God's Bleſſing might make impreſſion upon them. Accordingly I have deſigned (humbly imploring*

ring the Divine Aſſiſtance) to publiſh A Plain Method of Devotion for Sick and Dying Perſons; *that when the extremity of Age, the Weakneſs and Decays of Nature, or the Violence of a Diſeaſe do admoniſh them of their approaching Diſſolution, they may then be inſtructed what to do; how to behave themſelves both to God and Man; in what manner, and with what Circumſtances, they may think of leaving this World, before they enter into the next. Now according to the Order of the Church of* England (*whoſe Directions I deſire always to follow*) *the Miniſter, who Viſits Sick and Dying Perſons, doth admoniſh them (if they have*

not doue it before) to Settle their Temporal Eſtates, and make their Wills. Accordingly I found it neceſſary, as an Introduction to my intended Devotions, to Premiſe ſome plain and brief Directions in that matter. This I conjectured, would have been diſpatch'd in a few Pages. But my Thoughts being enlarged beyond my firſt expectation, I now obſerve I was much miſtaken.

Having given this faithful Account of the Occaſion of this following Treatiſe, I moſt humbly crave leave to publiſh it to the World under Your Grace's *Patronage; as a ſmall but ſincere acknowledgment of thoſe con-*

continued favours I have received from Your Grace.

The God of Heaven multiply His Bleſſings upon Your Grace, *Your Pious* Dutcheſs, *and Your Illuſtrious* Family; *Encreaſe and continue Your Proſperity here, and Crown You with His Glory hereafter. So Prayeth*

Your *Grace's* Chaplain, in all Dutiful Obſervance,

WILLIAM ASSHETON.

D

A DISCOURSE OF LAST WILLS AND Teſtaments.

THE Settling and Diſpoſing of a Man's Eſtate by his *Laſt Will* and *Teſtament*, is not only the moſt ſolemn, but alſo the concluding Act of his whole Life: And as ſuch, ſhould be managed with the greateſt Delibe-

ration and Prudence. And yet ſo inconſiderate are the generality of Men, that if they do not wholly neglect to make their Wills, (which too often happens) they then clap it up in haſt, and do it in a hurry, amidſt the pains and diſtractions of a Sick Bed; whereby ſuch a Will is not only imperfect and defective in it ſelf, but very diſturbing to the Dying Teſtator.

To avoid theſe Miſtakes, and to direct the Teſtator how to make his Will as a Prudent Man and a Chriſtian, is the Charitable deſign of this little Treatiſe.

And though it muſt be granted, That to Diſcourſe of Wills and Teſtaments is chiefly the Lawyers Province; yet, I hope, it will be thought no unſuitable Theme for a Divine, whilſt I proceed to inſtruct you in this Matter. For though your Lawyer can beſt direct you to draw your Will *Legally* and

and in *Form*; yet a Divine may be allowed to inſtruct you how to make it *Charitably*, and I may add *Prudently*, and conſequently to your Comfort.

Now the Advice I would give concerning *Laſt Wills* and *Teſtaments*, is as followeth.

I. *Make your Will in your Health.*
II. *Make a Chriſtian Will.*
III. *Make a Prudent Will.*
IV. *Make a Juſt Will.*
V. *Make a Charitable Will.*

I. *Make your Will in the time of your Health.* And do not defer ſo weighty a Work, which requires both leiſure and compoſedneſs of Mind, to your Death-bed; or at leaſt to that which you think is your Death-bed. 'Tis a very common practice for men thus to defer their Wills; but he who duly conſiders the miſchievous

conſequences of ſuch neglect, will more eaſily be perſuaded to rectify and amend it. Now amongſt others, theſe following Accidents may poſſibly happen.

1. *He who neglects to make his Will in his Health, and defers it to his Sick-bed, may poſſibly never make it at all.*

Do but conſider the uncertainty of your Lives; how ſuddenly, unexpectedly, and without the leaſt warning, many Men are ſnatched away, and hurried out of this World; and you will then eaſily be convinced of this Truth.

One Man, for inſtance, is unexpectedly aſſaulted by Padders or Ruffians, and ſo ſuddenly Dies by Sword or Piſtol. *Another* falling into bad Company, in the heat of Wine and Paſſion is provoked into a Quarrel, and ſo killed upon the Place. A *Third*, by a fall from his Horſe or down a Precipice,

Precipice, hath his Brains beat out. A *Fourth*, by ſome accident doth periſh by Water, and is taken up drowned.

But beſides theſe Caſualties, which take men off in an inſtant, there are ſome Diſtempers as ſudden and fatal. *Several* in perfect Health have been ſeized with an *Apoplexy*, and died in a minute. *Others*, by a *Lethargy* have been ſo ſtupid as not to anſwer a queſtion, or to take the leaſt notice of what is ſaid or done. *Some* have been ſeized with ſuch Malignant *Fevers*, that from the very firſt they became delirous and diſordered in their Reaſon.

Theſe are no feigned Caſes, but ſuch as, God knows, have too often happen'd.

Now we may fairly ſuppoſe that all theſe Inſtances were Men of Eſtates and Prudence; and that they firmly reſolved to give ſuch and ſuch Portions to their Chil-

dren; ſuch and ſuch Legacies to their Relations, not forgetting a conſiderable Charity to the Poor. And theſe they reſolved to have Legally diſpoſed by their Laſt Wills. But Death, as you have heard, unexpectedly comes and prevents them, and all is in confuſion, and nothing done.

Now that which hath happen'd to other Men, God may permit to happen to you.

A Prudent Man therefore, though he will hope for the beſt, and will Pray, *From ſudden death Good Lord deliver me*; yet with a juſt fear and caution will provide for the worſt: For ſuppoſe you ſhould Die ſuddenly or unexpectedly; What then? Let me then repeat it to you, as very good and Chriſtian Advice:

Make your Will in the time of your Health; for otherwiſe it may ſo happen you may never make it all.

2. *Sup-*

2. *Suppoſe a man hath both time and inclination to make his Will upon his Sick-Bed, yet it is then moſt commonly Imperfect and Defective.*

Indeed there are ſome Chronical Diſeaſes ſo gentle and eaſy; that could men be perſuaded to make their Wills, when they are firſt ſeized with ſuch lingring Diſtempers, they might then ſettle and diſpoſe their Eſtates with the ſame prudence as in their healths. But this is rarely to be ſuppoſed; for the ſame reaſons which prevailed with them to neglect it in their health, will have ſtill influence upon them. As,

1. *Doth the hope of long Life encourage them to defer it?*

As to this; the preſuming expectations of Decaying Perſons are very notorious. How will they hope even againſt hope, and flatter themſelves, and are vainly flatter'd by others, with ſuch

groundleſs fancies as theſe? 'Tis true; 'I find my ſelf a little indiſ-'poſed, but good Air and careful 'Nurſing will quickly reſtore me. 'And as weak as you now think 'me, I may live to ſee many a 'ſtronger man to go before me. Or,

2. *Is it a deſire of improving their Eſtates (that they may have ſomething conſiderable to bequeath) which occaſions them to neglect it?*

This likewiſe makes Impreſſion, even on weak decaying People.

'Tis true, ſaith the Conſump-'tive Perſon, I am admoniſhed to 'make my Will, and I reſolve to 'do it; only I think it prudent to 'put my Affairs in a little better 'Poſture, before I ſettle what I 'have. When I have made this 'Purchaſe; taken in that Mort-'gage; concluded ſuch a Bar-'gain; ſecured and gotten in theſe 'and thoſe Debts; then you ſhall

'ſee

'ſee I'll defer it no longer. Or,

3. *Is it a fond love for this World, and an unwillingneſs to leave it, which makes men thus backward in ſo weighty a Concern?* This alſo doth influence theſe Conſumptive People. For they are as loth to depart from their Houſes and Lands, as *Lot* was out of *Sodom*; who lingred and hung back when commanded to be gone.

Thus you ſee, let death give never ſo much notice, and the Diſeaſe be never ſo lingring, yet the concerns of theſe decaying perſons are as much neglected, and their Affairs are left in as great confuſion, as if they had been taken off by the ſudden ſtroke of the acuteſt diſtemper.

For when the Diſeaſe, by inſenſible Degrees, is come to its height, and the malignity of it hath conquered Nature; then his Phyſician at laſt gives him over, and whiſpers

whiſpers his condoling Friends to remind him of his End, to ſettle his Affairs, and to commend his Soul to God.

But ſuch is the fooliſh Pity of his Friends and Relations, they are commonly afraid to propoſe it to him, leſt it ſhould damp his Spirits, and diſorder his Thoughts, and ſo hinder his yet hoped for Recovery. But when at the laſt he finds himſelf ſunk, and his Spirits to fail, and obſerves his condoling Friends to ſtand round about him with Tears in their Eyes; being now convinced that he hath not, perhaps, many hours to live, he is at laſt perſuaded to ſend for the *Scrivener*, to take directions for the drawing of his *Will*. But what ſort of Will he is like to make, former experience in ſuch caſes as theſe, doth too ſadly teſtify.

For when his Imagination is diſturbed, his Thoughts diſtracted, his

his Memory either loſt, or diverted by his Pains, what can ſuch a man do under theſe Circumſtances, that is either fixt or prudent? A Will indeed he makes, but to ſpeak properly, 'tis the Will of others, of thoſe who are about him, more truly than his own. What their importunity ſhall ſuggeſt to him, tho perhaps never thought on before, he readily admits in hopes of a little reſpite, and that he may turn to the other ſide. From this diſtraction it happens, That *ſome*, for whom he hath a kindneſs, are wholly forgotten. *Others* are more liberally remembred; not becauſe they are dearer to him, but becauſe he loves not to be uneaſy, by diſpleaſing thoſe who attend him, and who preſs him to it.

In this hurry many times an unskilful Perſon hath the drawing of the Will, (becauſe no better could be got) whereby ſeveral miſtakes,

miſtakes, to the ruin of whole Families, have unfortunately happened. Or, if managed by a knowing Perſon, yet there being not time or conveniency to have a competent number of Witneſſes, the intended Will becomes void, becauſe not atteſted according to Law.

At this rate Things are uſually managed in theſe Death-Bed Diſpoſals; which are not only, as I have ſhewed you, imperfect in themſelves, but alſo

3. *Are very Diſturbing to the Dying Teſtator.*

Perſons and Things are then properly ſaid to be Diſturbing, when they unſeaſonably offer themſelves at ſuch a juncture of Time, when ſome other Tranſaction of greater Conſequent and Moment is to be attended.

Now when a Man is Dying, he hath done with this World, and leaves the Cares and Buſineſs of it to

to thoſe who ſurvive. His Thoughts ſhould then be fixt upon that happy Place, to which he is now going to remove. His only Treaſure is in Heaven, (for his earthly Treaſure muſt be left behind him) and where his Treaſure is, there ſhould his Heart, his Thoughts and Deſires, be alſo.

'Tis very improper therefore, nay impertinent and unſeaſonable, for a dying expiring Perſon to be diſturbed and diverted from his main Concerns, by theſe worldly diſtracting Thoughts and Cares.

When a man is convinced he hath not many days, perhaps not many hours, to review the Actions of his whole Life; and in the bitterneſs of his Soul is begging Pardon for his imperfect Repentance, is humbling himſelf before his Judge; and is paſſionately acknowledging his own Demerits, and pleading God's Mercy: And is raiſing his hope, that (through the

the Goodneſs of God, and the Merits of his dear Redeemer) in a little time all Tears ſhall be wiped away; when he ſhall be removed to that happy place, where neither Sin nor Sorrow, neither Satan nor Temptation ſhall be able to reach him.

Having thus attained ſome foretaſte of Glory, and a glimpſe and view of that Bleſſed State; and by the eye of Faith, and perhaps alſo of his Body, having ſeen the Guardian Angels even ready to conduct him: Having, I ſay, thus compoſed and raiſed his Soul, what a mean as well as diſturbing Diſpenſation is it, to be pulled down from this delightful Proſpect, and to be diverted with the rufflings of Parchments, and *Noverint Univerſi's?* to be told of Bills, and Bonds, and Reckonings; to be calculating and diſpoſing his Temporal Eſtate, when he is going to take Poſſeſſion of his Spiritual? The

The perplexing Agony of the departing Soul under ſuch diſturbance is ſcarce to be expreſſed. And therefore to avoid this diſtraction, make your Will in your health, when you have vigour of thought, and compoſedneſs of mind.

II. *Make a Chriſtian Will.* Which I explain thus. Let your Will be ſo compoſed, ſo framed and worded in the commendatory Part, as to declare your ſelf a Chriſtian.

The Preface or Introduction to that Form and Inſtrument of Writing, which we call a Laſt Will or Teſtament, you know is this, *In the name of God, Amen.* And having thus ſolemnly called upon God, the Teſtator then proceeds to diſpoſe of his Concerns, in theſe *Three* Inſtances. His *Soul*, his *Body*, and his *Eſtate*.

The

The firſt thing which the Teſtator diſpoſeth is his *Soul*. For ſo run the words. *Firſt and principally I commend my Soul into the hands of God, my Creator.* But here too many of our Laſt Wills and Teſtaments do ſtop, and abruptly break off. And then go on in a hurry, to the Body and Eſtate. But how great an *indecorum* this is, nay even ſcandal to the Chriſtian Religion, will plainly appear when duly conſider'd.

I commend my Soul into the hands of God my Creator, ſaith the dying Perſon. But thus a *Jew*, a *Turk*, or a *Heathen* may commend his Soul. For all theſe do acknowledge God their Creator. And therefore that ſomething further muſt be added, I thus eaſily convince you.

When a man makes his Will, he is either really dying, or he dies by anticipation; *i. e.* he puts himſelf into a poſture of dying. And

And then uſeth theſe words; *I commend my Soul into the hands of God.*

But why doth he thus commend his Soul? Is it not in hopes that God will accept it? But what now is the ground of this hope? Why doth he expect that God ſhould receive his Soul? That he ſhould not leave it to the malice and fury of Helliſh Fiends, who immediately upon its ſeparation from the Body, ſtand ready to ſeize and devour it; but that he ſends his Holy Angels to ſhelter and protect it, to guide and conduct it to a Place of Bliſs?

Doubtleſs no other reaſon can be aſſigned of this his hope, but only the Merits of his Bleſſed Saviour; for *there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved, but only the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

And therefore for a dying Chriſtian to commend his Soul to God,

without the least mention of a Saviour, 'tis a contradiction to the Christian Religion: 'Tis not only a careless Omission, but the highest Presumption.

When therefore you make your Will, Commend your Soul to God in such a manner as may declare your Christianity; give then a *reason of the hope that is in you*; especially if your Religion is suspected (either as having none at all, or as being Heretical and Corrupt) then Vindicate your self, by making a short, but pathetical Profession of your Faith and Hope, in the beginning of your Will.

And that you may the better apprehend what I design, you may Commend your Soul in this, or the like form.

First and Principally, I Commend my Soul into the Hands of Almighty God, as of a Faithful Creator. Which I humbly beseech him mercifully

fully to accept: Looking upon it, not as it is in it ſelf (infinitely polluted with Sin) but as it is Redeemed and purged with the Precious Blood of his Only Beloved Son, and my moſt ſweet Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; in confidence of whoſe Merits and Mediation alone it is, that I caſt my ſelf upon the Mercy of God for the Pardon of my Sins, and the Hopes of Eternal Life.

This is what I deſign when I admoniſh you to make a *Chriſtian Will.*

III. *Make a Prudent Will.*

The which Prudence ought to expreſs it ſelf in *Two* things.

1. *In the form of Words and Phraſes, in which the Will is Drawn and Compoſed.*

2. *In the Subject-matter of the Will; in the Diſtribution of an Eſtate, whether Real or Perſonal.*

As to the *Firſt.* Were it pertinent to repeat the odd fanciful and

fected Expreſſions of ſome *Wills* and *Teſtaments*, you would then be convinced how very proper it is to give ſome caution about this matter. Now to avoid the miſtakes of ſuch foppiſh affected People, let the Expreſſions of your Will be grave and ſober; and do not expoſe your ſelf to the juſt Cenſures of Poſterity, by any undecent or extravagant Paſſage. Remember your Will ſtands upon Record for Publick peruſal; and therefore to be idle and extravagant in this laſt Act of your Life, is to be hiſs'd off the Stage, and to proclaim your folly to all ſucceeding Ages.

But I hope there are not many Impertinents in ſo Solemn an Inſtance. And ſo I paſs on to the *Second*; which is of more general concernment, *viz. The Prudence of a Teſtator in the Diſtribution of his Eſtate.*

And

And here the utmoſt I can pretend, is only to ſuggeſt ſome general Directions. The Capacities of men are ſo different, and their Circumſtances ſo various, that much muſt be left to Prudence. However, though particular Perſons muſt determine as their caſe ſhall require, yet it may be uſeful to Direct as followeth.

In the Diſtribution of an Eſtate, do not only conſider the *Neceſſity* of your *Relatives* (for then the Pooreſt ought to have the greateſt ſhare) but proportion your Legacies, as Chriſtian Prudence will direct you, according to other meaſures.

Obſerve the different Diſpoſitions and Behaviour of your *Children*, your *Friends*, and *Dependants*.

Some are brisk and active in the management of Buſineſs; who, as we phraſe it, *will look to themſelves and ſecure their own. Others*

are of a quiet, ſedate, and eaſy Temper, or it may be of weak and ſlender Intellectuals; who either do not love trouble, or do not underſtand it. *Some* are thrifty and frugal, who will not only keep, but improve what you give them. *Others* are wild and extravagant, who ſcorn to be confined, and think it below their Character to live by rule and meaſure.

Some have been ſober and regular, dutiful and obedient, in their Behaviour towards you. *Others* have been rude and diſobliging, inſolent and affronting, in their Carriage towards you.

Now when you deſign to make your Will, and diſtribute your Legacies, 'tis a juſt inſtance of Chriſtian Prudence, duly to examine the ſeveral Capacities and Circumſtances of your Dependants, and diſtribute accordingly.

If

If your Children and Relations are notoriouſly Vicious and debauched (which is the Affliction of many good Parents) do not abdicate or caſt them off (for that would harden and confirm them in their Wickedneſs) but make Proviſion for them in *Truſt*; in ſuch manner and with ſuch Circumſtances, as may relieve their Neceſſities, but not their Luſts.

Thoſe who love their eaſe and quiet, or perhaps are of eaſy Tempers, ſhould not be encumbred with any thing that is litigious; or which being perplexing, requires ſagacious diligence to manage or ſecure. *Thoſe* who have been dutiful and obliging, ſhould have a mark of kindneſs ſet upon them; yet ſo, as not to Diſinherit your Firſt-born, or to deprive him of his Birth-right.

Theſe things, I ſay, ought to be conſidered deliberately, and in

the fear of God. And do not fancy, that becauſe your Eſtate is your own, that therefore you have liberty to Bequeath it as you pleaſe; for though it is thus far your own, that there is no juſt Human Claim againſt you; yet it is ſtill the Property of Almighty God, the Chief Sovereign of the World; before whom you muſt ſhortly give an Account of your Stewardſhip, and how you have Diſtributed and Bequeathed your Eſtate.

IV. *Make a Juſt Will.*

Before I can exhort the Teſtator to be *Charitable* (of which in its proper Place) I muſt firſt admoniſh him to be *Juſt*. And when I adviſe him to be Juſt, I do not ſo much denote the Juſtice and Equity of his Diſtribution (for of this I have Diſcourſed under the former Topick) as the Juſtice of his Title to thoſe Poſ-

ſeſſions

ſeſſions he is now going to Bequeath. My plain meaning is this; Before a man pretends, by making his Will, to Bequeath his Eſtate, let him firſt be fully ſatisfied that he hath a Juſt Title to it, and that what he Diſpoſeth is his own.

We have a blunt Proverb concerning ſome Men, *Who Rob* Peter *to Pay* Paul: Who Will pinch with one hand, to open and enlarge the other; who are rapacious and Unjuſt in ſome inſtances, that they may be kind and Charitable in others. And this, I doubt, is too frequent a Practice. But let ſuch men know (though they do not love to be told it) there is a Duty called *Reſtitution*; whereby all injurious Perſons are not only obliged to make a reconciling Acknowledgment, but alſo Reparation and Satisfaction for the wrongs they have done.

To

To enforce this, though briefly, I ſhall a little explain the nature of *Reſtitution*, with the reaſon of it.

As our Duty is Twofold, Our Duty towards God, and our Duty towards our Neighbour; ſo alſo Sins and Tranſgreſſions, which are a breach and violation of that Duty, are likewiſe Twofold, *viz.* Sins againſt God, and Sins againſt our Neighbour.

Both theſe kinds of Sins ſhall certainly be pardoned upon our true Repentance; becauſe God, who is Faithful and Juſt, hath expreſly Promiſed Pardon upon that Condition. But now 'tis pertinent to remind you, that more is requir'd to perfect our Repentance of Sins againſt our Neighbour, than of Sins againſt God only.

Sins againſt God only, are ſufficiently attoned by Reformation and Amendment. When we return

turn to our Duty, and own the Divine Authority by a ſincere Obedience, the Juſtice of God is then ſatisfied, and he will again receive us into his Grace and Favour, through the powerful Interceſſion of our Dear Redeemer.

But now as to thoſe Sins which do not barely Offend God, but are alſo Offenſive and Injurious to our Neighbour, the Caſe is different, and there is more required to the Pardon of ſuch Sins.

For Sins againſt our Neighbour, do not only include an Offence againſt God (who hath Commanded us to Love our Brother) but alſo an affront and injury againſt men. And therefore, though upon our true Repentance God will forgive his ſhare of the Sin, and will remit it ſo far as it is an act of Diſobedience againſt himſelf; yet he will not forgive the Affront and Injury againſt Men, till we have firſt ſought a Recon-

Reconciliation with thoſe we have Affronted, and have made Reſtitution to thoſe we have wronged, by giving Satisfaction for the Damage that hath been done them.

Of this Reconciliation (the neceſſity of it, and the manner how it is to be made) I ſhall Diſcourſe in its proper Place. That which I am now pertinently to enforce, is *Reſtitution:* Which according to the true ſenſe and meaning of the word doth denote, *A Reſtoring or giving back to any Perſon, what was wrongfully taken, and is ſtill detained from him.* The which Reſtitution, ſo far as we are able, is a neceſſary Duty in the Judgment of all ſorts of Caſuiſts; *Proteſtant* and *Papiſt*, *Lutheran* and *Calviniſt*, do all of them ſubſcribe to that well-known ſaying of St. *Auguſtin*, *Non remittetur Peccatum, niſi reſtituatur ablatum.* Epiſt 54. ad Maced. *The Sin ſhall not be Pardoned, except that*

that which hath been Unjuſtly gotten be Reſtored. And the reaſon hereof is given by the ſame Father in the foregoing words. *Si res aliena propter quam peccatum eſt, cum reddi poſſit non redditur, non agitur pœnitentiæ ſed fingitur. If a man reſtore not ill-gotten Goods, being able, his Repentance is but counterfeit, and not ſincere.*

From both which Sentences put together, St. *Auguſtine*'s Argument is this; Without Repentance Sin ſhall not be Pardoned. But whoever doth not make Reſtitution when it is in his Power, doth not truly Repent (his Repentance is but Counterfeit); *Therefore* without Reſtitution no hopes of Pardon.

Suppoſe then that you have Injured another Man in his Eſtate, either by Theft, or Fraud, or Oppreſſion; it will not be ſufficient to Abſolve you, and to procure your Pardon, that for the future you

you forbear Defrauding, Forcing, or Stealing from him any more; but if it be in your Power you muſt make Reſtitution of all that you have wrongfully deprived him of; And the Reaſon is this.

'Tis a known act of Juſtice, *Suum cuique tribuere. To give every Man his own.* Now it's certain, that your wrongful Seizure or detaining of what is another Man's, doth not alienate his Right to it: So that he hath ſtill the ſame Right to it, whilſt *you* keep it from him, as he had at firſt when it was taken from *him.* And conſequently, till you Reſtore it back to him again, you ſtill continue to wrong him of it: And your detaining it, is a continued repetition of that Fraud, or Theft, or Oppreſſion, by which it was at firſt wrongfully Seized. And ſo long as you continue the *Fraud*, the *Theft*, or the *Oppreſſion*, 'tis moſt Vain and Hypocritical to pretend

pretend to Repent you of it. For certainly Repentance can never be true nor ſincere, whilſt you continue in that Sin of which you ſeem to repent. And without true Repentance, no hopes of Pardon.

When therefore you deſign to Bequeath your Eſtate; if upon a ſtrict ſearch or inquiry you obſerve that any part of your Eſtate hath been unjuſtly gotten, be ſo juſt then to your Self and Family, as to make a faithful Reſtitution of it. If not to the Injured Perſon himſelf (who perhaps is Deceaſed) then to his Heirs or Relations. But if to theſe (by reaſon of Abſence, great Diſtance, or ſome other Cauſe) it cannot conveniently be made, then give it to the Poor: Who in ſuch a Caſe are God's Receivers.

And if herein I ſhall ſeem too ſevere a Caſuiſt (ſince this Reſtitution, if honeſtly made, might be

be to the impoveriſhing of many Perſons and Families) I ſhall then deſire them to conſider:

1. That it is much better, if the caſe ſhould ſo require, to part with all their Eſtates here on Earth, than to be excluded the Kingdom of Heaven. As all injurious, rapacious Perſons are threatned to be.

2. If the Concern is for their Relations they leave behind them (ſince we ſuppoſe, they were not convinced of the neceſſity of this Reſtitution, till they lay upon their Death-Bed) let them then conſider, that this Reſtitution is the moſt effectual Method to ſecure that which is left, by continuing God's Bleſſing upon it.

For there is a ſtrange unaccountable Canker, through the juſt Judgment of God, commonly attending all Goods, Eſtates, or parts of Eſtates diſhoneſtly gotten.

ten. 'Tis better therefore (even for their ſakes) to leave a man's Relations honeſtly Poor, than diſhoneſtly Rich. Whatever therefore you Bequeath to your Children and to your Friends, be it more or be it leſs, be ſure it be honeſtly gotten. This is what I intend, when I admoniſh you to make a Juſt Will.

V. *Make a Charitable Will.*

'Tis the Direction of the Church of *England*, in the *Order for the Viſitation of the Sick*, That *the Miniſter ſhould not omit earneſtly to move ſuch Sick Perſons as are of Ability, to be liberal to the Poor.*

Whence obſerve,

1. That it is the Duty of the Clergy to move Sick and Dying Perſons to *Remember the Poor.*

2. If ſuch Sick and Bequeathing Perſons are of Ability, they are then to move them to be *libe-*

ral in their Gifts and Legacies to the Poor.

3. They are not only to move them, but *earneſtly* and with *importunity* to move them.

If therefore the Covetous Miſers of this world, who value their Bags more than their Souls, ſhall be offended at this freedom, (as if this part of our Office were a Pragmatical Encroachment; as if herein we did tranſgreſs the limits of our Calling, and were as Buſy-bodies in other mens matters) I ſhall for the Conviction of ſuch Perſons, and the juſt Vindication of my Profeſſion, ſuggeſt the Reaſons of ſuch Charitable Diſtributions: And from thence ſhall ſhew them why we of the Clergy do think our ſelves obliged, with ſuch repeated plainneſs, to remind them of this Duty.

The Clergy by their Office and Calling are the Ambaſſadors of Chriſt. Or if that may ſeem a Title

tle of too much State, they are the Stewards of his Houſhold, who are to diſtribute to the Family their ſeveral Portions.

Now St. *Paul*, who was not only a faithful Paſtor of the Flock, but alſo a Governor of the Paſtors themſelves, hath left this Apoſtolical Injunction to his Son *Timothy*, and in him to all other Paſtors and Miniſters of God's Word:

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy: That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate; laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life, 1 Tim. 6. 17, 18, 19.

It appears from this Injunction of St. *Paul*, that Rich men, as

well as others, are to be admoniſh
ed of their Duty. *Charge then*
that are rich in this world. And i
their Loftineſs ſhall think ſcorn t
be thus Tutor'd by the Clergy
they are then adviſed, *that they b*
not high minded; not to be prou
and inſolent; not to ſlight an
deſpiſe their meaner Brethren.
And the more effectually to abat
their Confidence, they are fur
ther to be admoniſh'd, that thei
Riches are uncertain; and there
fore 'tis the higheſt folly to *truſ*
in uncertain riches.

Solomon's Obſervation, Tha
riches make themſelves wings, an
flee away as an eagle towards heaven
Prov. 23. 5. (*i. e.* they are gon
with a ſwift and imperceptible
motion) is fully confirmed by
daily experience. *Fire, Robbery*
Suretyſhip, the Falſeneſs of
Friend, a Sinking Ship, a Treaſon-
able Word, the Tragical Exceſſe
of Wine and Paſſion, with many
other

other ſuch like Accidents, have ſunk and ruined the Greateſt in a Moment.

Now theſe poſſible Events, which may happen to the Richeſt and level them with the Pooreſt, do ſeaſonably admoniſh the Rich men of this world not to be high-minded, nor to truſt in uncertain Riches. And therefore ſince Riches are ſuch uncertain Poſſeſſions, and may and will ſo unexpectedly leave them, 'tis Charity to direct theſe Rich men where to put their Truſt; even *in the living God*: Who is not only a ſure and certain Comfort (for he is a living God, and a living Comfort) but all other Comforts do flow from him: *Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.*

And why is it that he *giveth us richly all things to enjoy?* Why have theſe rich men ſo large a ſhare of this world? 'Tis for this reaſon, *viz. That they may do good,*

be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate. And for their encouragement the Apoſtle aſſures them, that by thus *doing good*, &c. they *lay up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

From theſe Grounds and Reaſons (which ſhall be more diſtinctly enforced in their proper place) St. *Paul* doth direct the Clergy not only to admoniſh, but even to charge and command Rich men (to charge them Authoritatively and upon their Peril, for ſo the word παραγγελλε denotes) to be Charitable to the Poor.

And what St. *Paul* commanded *Timothy*, and in him the reſt of the Clergy, he firſt practiſed himſelf. He admoniſheth his *Romans*, to *diſtribute to the neceſſities of the ſaints*, Rom. 12. 13. He exhorts his *Galatians*, to *do good to all men*, Gal. 6. 10. He reminds his *Hebrews*,

brews, To do good and to communicate, forget not; for with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed, Heb. 13. 16. And in his Epiſtle to the *Epheſians* he hath thus Cautioned and Commanded Poor Labouring men; *Let him that ſtole ſteal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth*, Eph. 4. 28. Poor people muſt not pretend to excuſe their ſtealing, becauſe they are in want. But they muſt work for their living in ſome honeſt Calling: And that not only to maintain themſelves, but alſo (though they ſweat to provide for their own Families) they muſt even out of their daily Labour contribute to relieve their poor, helpleſs, diſabled Neighbours.

Thus St. *Paul* did teach and admoniſh. And the reſt of the Apoſtles, as occaſion was offered,

did deliver the ſame Doctrine with their *beloved Brother Paul.*

St. *James* hath given us this Syſtem of Religion; *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the father is this; To viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction,* (i. e. to comfort and relieve all diſtreſſed and helpleſs perſons) *and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world, James* 1. 27. And becauſe there were great Pretences to Faith in his days as well as ours, the ſame Apoſtle inſtructs us how to judge whether our Faith be ſincere or no; *What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man ſay he hath faith, and have not works? can faith ſave him? If a brother or ſiſter be naked, and deſtitute of daily food, and one of you ſay unto them, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled; notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Even ſo faith if it hath not works, is dead, being*

being alone, Jam. 2. 14, 15, 16, 17. As if he had ſaid, Unleſs according to your capacity you are ready to do good, and relieve thoſe that are in want, all your pretences to Religion are vain and hypocritical.

And this moſt important Truth (which the Rich men of this World are ſo unwilling to believe) is further confirmed by St. *John*. The deſign of whoſe Epiſtles is to exhort us to the love of God and our Brother. The latter of which, as he largely ſhews us, is the ſureſt Mark and Evidence of the former. *If a man ſay, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a liar: For he that loveth not his Brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen?* 1 Joh. 4. 20. *No man hath ſeen God at any time.* God is a Spirit and inviſible, and we do not converſe with God as we do with one another. How then can we pretend

pretend to this love of God, or aſſure our ſelves that we have this Divine Grace? Now St. *John* takes care to ſatisfy us in this matter, *v.* 21. *He who loveth God, let him love his Brother alſo.* i. e. He who pretends to love God, let him prove his love to God by the love of his Brother. But how ſhall we evidence this love of God by our love to our Brother? Of this the Apoſtle gives us a plain and convincing Proof, *cap.* 3. *v.* 17. *Whoſo hath this Worlds good, and ſeeth his Brother have need, and ſhutteth up his Bowels of compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? i. e.* He who relieveth not his poor Brother, when it is in his power, he neither loveth God nor his Brother. And *he that loveth not his Brother abideth in death,* v. 14.

And becauſe this may be cenſured as a very harſh and uncharitable Sentence, the Apoſtle thus con-

confirms it in the following verſe, v. 15. *Whoſoever hateth his brother, is a Murderer; and ye know that no Murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.*

With ſuch powerful Motives as theſe, the Apoſtles of our Lord did recommend this moſt neceſſary Duty of Charity.

And as this was the Doctrine of the Apoſtles, ſo alſo of our Bleſſed Lord himſelf.

Give Alms of ſuch things as you have; and behold, all things are clean unto you, Luk. 11. 41. *Sell that ye have, and give Alms: provide your ſelves bags which wax not old, a treaſure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth,* Luk. 12. 33. *And I ſay unto you, Make to your ſelves friends of the Mammon of unrighteouſneſs; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlaſting habitations,* Luk. 16. 9. *Love ye your Enemies, and do good, and*

and lend, hoping for nothing again: and your reward ſhall be great, and ye ſhall be the Children of the Higheſt: for he is kind to the unthankful, and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father alſo is merciful, Luk. 6. 35, 36.

But in no part of the Goſpel is this Duty of Charity ſo effectually recommended as in *Matth.* 25. *v.* 31. *&c.* The words contain the Proceſs of the Great and Final Judgment; punctually deſcribed by our Saviour, and our Judge. They are of infinite concernment to us all. And therefore I ſhall tranſcribe them at large. And the rather, becauſe, in its proper Place; I ſhall make ſome Remarks and Obſervations upon them.

When the Son of man ſhall come in his Glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the throne of his Glory. And before him ſhall be gathered all nations;

tions; and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a Shepherd divideth his Sheep from the Goats: And he ſhall ſet the Sheep on his right hand, but the Goats on the left. Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on his right hand, Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink: I was a ſtranger and ye took me in: Naked, and ye cloathed me: I was ſick, and ye viſited me: I was in priſon, and ye came unto me. Then ſhall the righteous anſwer him, ſaying, Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirſty, and gave thee drink? When ſaw we thee a ſtranger, and took thee in? or naked, and cloathed thee? Or when ſaw we thee ſick, or in Priſon, and came unto thee. And the King ſhall anſwer and ſay unto them, Verily I ſay

ſay unto you, In as much as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my Brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then ſhall he ſay alſo unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye cloathed me not: ſick, and in priſon, and ye viſited me not. Then ſhall they alſo anſwer him, ſaying, Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungred, or athirſt, or a ſtranger, or naked, or ſick, or in Priſon, and did not Miniſter unto thee? Then ſhall he anſwer them, ſaying, Verily I ſay unto you, In as much as ye did it not to one of the leaſt of theſe, ye did it not to me. And theſe ſhall go into everlaſting Puniſhment: But the Righteous into life eternal.

From

From theſe words of our B. Saviour 'tis pertinent to obſerve; That though (as appears from other Places of Scripture) we muſt be judged for *what we have done in the Body, i.e.* for all the good or evil that we have done in this World; yet our Saviour in deſcribing the Proceſs of the Laſt Judgment, makes no mention of any thing but Acts of Charity. From whence you may be admoniſhed, how neceſſary it is to do all the good you can whilſt you live; and to improve all thoſe Talents with which you are intruſted (particularly your wealth) to the higheſt advantage.

And as a further Confirmation of this neceſſary Duty, I muſt not omit to obſerve; That Charity to the Poor, is not only commanded in the Goſpel, but alſo in the Law and the Prophets.

If

If thy Brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou ſhalt relieve him: yea though he be a ſtranger, or a ſojourner; that he may live with thee, Lev. 25. 35. *If there be among you a poor man of one of thy Brethren, within any of thy Gates, in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou ſhalt not harden thy heart, nor ſhut thy hand from thy poor Brother. Thou ſhalt ſurely give him, and thine heart ſhall not be grieved when thou giveſt unto him: becauſe that for this thing the Lord thy God ſhall bleſs thee in all thy works, and in all thou putteſt thine hand unto. For the Poor ſhall never ceaſe out of the Land: therefore I command thee, ſaying, Thou ſhalt open thine hand wide unto thy Brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land,* Deut. 15. 7, —10, 11. *Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the Poor: the Lord will deliver him in time*

of

of trouble. The Lord will preſerve him, and keep him alive, and he ſhall be bleſſed upon the earth; and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will ſtrengthen him upon the bed of languiſhing; thou wilt make all his bed in his ſickneſs, Pſal. 41. 1, 2, 3. *A good man ſheweth favour, and lendeth; he will guide his affairs with diſcretion. He hath diſperſed, he hath given to the poor: his righteouſneſs endureth for ever; his horn ſhall be exalted with honour,* Pſal. 112. 5,—9. *He that deſpiſeth his neighbour, ſinneth; but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he. He that oppreſſeth the poor, reproacheth his maker; but he that honoureth him, hath mercy on the poor,* Prov. 14. 21,—31. *He that giveth unto the poor ſhall not lack; but he that hideth his eyes ſhall have many a curſe,* Prov. 28. 27. *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord; and that which he hath*

given will he pay him again, Prov. 19. 17. And when God himſelf did declare what thoſe Acts are, which render Penitential Devotions moſt agreeable to him, and moſt effectual, he thus expreſſeth his mind: *Is not this the faſt which I have choſen? to looſe the bands of wickedneſs, to undo the heavy burthens, to let the oppreſſed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are caſt out, to thine houſe; when thou ſeeſt the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thy ſelf from thine own fleſh?* Iſa. 58. 6, 7.

And when *Daniel* would preſcribe to King *Nebuchadnezzar* the beſt way of Amendment, and the ſureſt means of averting God's Judgments impendent on him, he thus ſpeaks: *Wherefore, O King, let my counſel be acceptable unto thee; break off thy ſins by righteouſneſs,*

neſs, and thine iniquities by ſhewing mercy to the poor, Dan. 4. 27.

From theſe Premiſes it appears, That this great Duty of Almſ-giving and Charity to the Poor, is moſt expreſly commanded, not only by our B. Saviour and his Apoſtles, but alſo by *Moſes* and the Prophets.

And though ſuch undeniable Authority, when duly conſider'd, is ſufficient to convince even the moſt obſtinate Worldling; yet the more effectually to perſuade him, I ſhall briefly ſuggeſt ſome of thoſe Reaſons and Motives which are contained in the forementioned Scriptures.

1. *Charity to the poor makes us like unto God.* For hereby we imitate and reſemble the Divine Nature. *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect*, Matth. 5. 48. That is, as our B. Saviour explains himſelf, *Be ye therefore merciful, as*

your father alſo is merciful, Luke 6. 36. This is that Perfection in which we are commanded to imitate our Heavenly Father; *Who is merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs*, Exod. 34. 6. Who *delighteth in mercy*, Mic. 7. 18. Who *will wait that he may be gracious*, Iſa. 30. 18. *Who is the father of mercies, and the God of all comfort*, 1 Cor. 1. 3. Who is *kind unto the unthankful and to the evil*, Luke 6. 35. *He is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works*, Pſal. 145. 9.

To do good therefore, and to ſhew mercy; To be kind to thoſe that are afflicted; To comfort thoſe that are in diſtreſs; To relieve thoſe that are in Want; is not only Noble and Generous, but 'tis Divine and God-like. Thus to act, is to *be followers of God as dear children*; and *to walk in love as Chriſt alſo hath loved us*, Eph. 5. 1, 2.

2. *Cha-*

2. *Charity to the Poor is an Act of Juſtice.*

'Tis the noted Pretence of the moſt Covetous Miſers, whilſt living; and their uſual Character beſtowed upon them by their ſurviving Friends, when dead; *That they were very juſt and honeſt, and punctual in all their dealings. And they will challenge any one to ſay, They ever wronged him in a Farthing.*

This is their Triumph and their Crown: This they fancy muſt ſecure their Reputations in this world, and their Souls in the next.

But it is the greateſt Charity to undeceive their flattering Hopes, and to deal plainly and impartially with them in this matter.

1. They ſay, *They are ſtrictly Juſt, and were never Falſe in their Dealings.* At preſent we'll ſuppoſe it. What then? Is nothing more required, than to be Juſt, and to do no Wrong? Is there not

Right as well as *Wrong*? Is there not ſuch a Duty as *Mercy*, as well as *Juſtice*? Are there not *Poor* to be relieved, as well as *Creditors* to be paid? *Ye have the poor always with you*, ſaith our B. Saviour, *Mark* 14. 7. But for what reaſon think you are ſuch Objects of Pity, ſuch helpleſs Wretches, ſo frequent amongſt us? Can you fancy, that they are only placed as a Foil to your Greatneſs? That you may *deſpicere*, look down upon theſe Underlings with a ſcornful eye? Is it only to inſult over them, and deſpiſe them, to contemn and oppreſs them? No, certainly. But *the poor you have always with you*, that *whenſoever you will you may do them good*. That you may *Comfort* and *Refreſh* them; that you may *Relieve* and *Protect* them; and in any other Inſtance, as their caſe ſhall require, may exerciſe and enlarge your Charity towards them. Which if you ſhall neglect to do,

then

then hearken to your Sentence, (and it is not your pretence of being Juſt, and your Fair, Square Dealing, as you call it, that can reverſe that diſmal Doom) *Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a ſtranger and ye took me not in; naked, and ye cloathed me not; ſick and in priſon, and ye viſited me not.* And therefore though the *Laws* of the *Land*, or ſome other Secular Deſign, may ſo far reſtrain you, that you *do them no Wrong*, (and ſo far may give you the Reputation of being Juſt and Honeſt) yet if (according to your Ability and their Occaſions) you do them no good, you ſhall be condemned for your Uncharitableneſs, as well as for the greateſt Injuſtice. But

2. *Theſe Covetous Rich Men, who will not be perſuaded to be Cha-*

ritable to the Poor, they are far from being Juſt. As I thus eaſily convince them.

To be *Juſt*, is *to give every man his own.* If therefore upon enquiry it doth appear, That a Prudent, Well-regulated Charity is the Poor Man's *Own*, his *Property*, his *Due*; then thoſe who deny it are apparently *Unjuſt.*

To prove this, I muſt remind them of this known Truth.

Almighty God, the Sovereign Lord and Proprietary in Chief of the whole World, hath given the Earth to the Children of Men; not *abſolutely*, and without reſerve, to diſpoſe of it as they pleaſe; but *Conditionally*, and as it were in *Truſt*, for ſuch and ſuch Uſes, according to God's Direction and Appointment.

And therefore all thoſe vaſt Heaps of Wealth in which the Miſers of this world do ſo pride themſelves, and ſay, *All this is Mine*,

Mine; they are only committed to them as Stewards, to be employed and diſpoſed of for their Great Maſter's Uſe.

Now as to Wealth and Riches, God hath thus enjoined and commanded; That after we have ſatisfied our own Neceſſities, and ſupplied our reaſonable Occaſions (*i. e.* have lived according to our Quality, and *enjoyed our Portion*) we are then to employ the remainder of our Eſtates for the Relief of our Poor Brethren. *If we have two coats* (*i. e.* one more than we need) *we ſhould impart to him that hath none. If we have meat* (*i. e.* in abundance, and to ſpare) *we ſhould do likewiſe*, and give to him that wants it, *Luke* 3. 11. And to neglect ſuch Diſtribution is to be unfaithful Stewards, by miſapplying our Maſter's Goods, and by detaining from our Poor Neighbour what God hath commanded us to give him. *Withhold*

not

not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it, Prov. 3. 27. From which Precept of *Solomon* I thus infer; That thoſe Rich Men who refuſe to relieve their Poor Brother when it is in their power, they deny him his *Due*, and conſequently are *Unjuſt*.

3. *Charity to the Poor is the moſt proper and principal expreſſion of our Gratitude to God.*

There is no Character ſo afflicting, as *Ungrateful Wretch. Ingratum ſi dixeris, omnia dixiſti.* Call a man Ungrateful, and you cannot call him worſe. *If ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo love thoſe that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo do even the ſame*, Luke 6. 32, 33. Even Sinners, the worſt and vileſt of men, will love thoſe who do them good, and will acknowledge their Benefactors. Now

Now Almighty God is confeſſedly the moſt obliging, and the greateſt Benefactor: *Who daily loadeth us with hii benefits*, Pſal. 68. 19. *And crowneth us with loving kindneſs and tender mercies*, *Pſal.* 103. 4. All that we are, all that we have, all that we can hope for, is alone from his Bounty: *It is he that hath made us, and not we our ſelves*, Pſal. 100. 3. 'Tis he that preſerves us: *For in him we live, and move*, as well as *have our being*, Acts 17. 28. All the Comforts and Conveniences of our Lives, the Health of our Bodies, the Soundneſs of our Reaſon, the Competency of our Eſtates (for it is *God that giveth power to get wealth*) the Society of our Friends, nay, the very Earth which feeds and ſupports us, the Air we breathe, the Sun and Stars which by their benign Influence do chear and revive us, they are all his Creatures, and are made for our uſe. But

But if the Bleſſings of this life do ſo ſenſibly affect us, how ſhould we be ttanſported with the Expectations of the next? What unexpreſſible Kindneſs is it, that Rebels and Traytors ſhould not only have their Pardon, but be taken into Grace and Favour, be admitted to the Dignity of being the Children of God, and Heirs of Salvation?

But could we look beyond the Vail, and take one ſingle Glance at thoſe Glories which are there prepared for thoſe that love God; O! what Raptures would it raiſe in us; how would it enlarge our Souls towards our dear Redeemer? *What ſhall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards us?* Pſal. 116. 12. Nay, what ſhall we not render him? Shall we refuſe him any thing, who hath given us all things? *He that ſpared not his own ſon, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him*

him alſo freely give us all things? Rom. 8. 32.

Indeed *our Goodneſs extends not to God*, Pſal. 16. 2. And *a man cannot be profitable to his maker*, *Job* 22. 2. All that we can pretend to do in this kind, is *indirectly*, in the Perſons of his Poor Relations. *Ye have the Poor with you always, and whenſoever you will ye may do them good*, Mark 14. 7. Theſe are his Deputy-Receivers: And what we do or not do to theſe, he acknowledgeth as done or not done to himſelf. *Inaſmuch as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me.* And, *Inaſmuch as ye did it not to one of the leaſt of theſe, ye did it not to me.* Matth. 25. 40, 45.

So that to deſpiſe and contemn the Poor, is an Affront to their Maker. And to take no notice of them, but to reject their Petitions for *God* and *Chriſt's ſake*, is a Deſpight

ſpight and Indignity to him who ſent them. And to refuſe by their hands to return ſome ſmall Pittance of your Superfluities to *Him*, who is your Beſt Friend, and moſt Bountiful Benefactor, is the vileſt Ingratitude.

4. *Charity to the Poor is an Act of Prudence, and of great advantage to our ſelves:* Becauſe God who is faithful hath promiſed That it ſhall moſt plentifully be rewarded, 1. In this Life. 2. The Life to come.

With reſpect to this Life, there are *Three* ſignal Advantages of a well-regulated Charity. It is the beſt Expedient, 1. *To Secure and Preſerve an Eſtate.* 2. *To Improve and Increaſe an Eſtate.* 3. *To Bleſs and Sanctify an Eſtate.*

1. *A Charitable Diſtribution of your Wealth, is the ſureſt Expedient to Preſerve your Eſtate.*

This the Covetous Miſers, whoſe noted Motto is, *To Have*

and to Hold, (and conſequently to part with nothing) will hardly believe. But our B. Saviour, who hath aſſured them (if they durſt but take his word) that *it is more bleſſed to give than to receive*, would eaſily convince them, That Charity is the beſt Tenure; and will continue a Name, and perpetuate a Family more firmly than all their *Fines*, and *Vouchers*, and *Entails*, (thoſe Clenching Nails of the *Law*) can pretend to.

For alas! How ſlight a Title is a Legal Right? How ſlender Security is the firmeſt Conveyance againſt Deſtructive Caſualties?

Will you charm a Thief with Paper and Parchment? Or will it ſtop the devouring Flames, to tell them that you have an unqueſtionable *Deed of Sale*; and that this Houſe which they are now ready to conſume, is ſettled upon *You* and your *Heirs* for ever? Will an aſtoniſhing Earthquake, when

when God gives it a Commiſſion to ſwallow up, be fix'd and firm at the Pleadings of your Learned Council? Will the Winds grow calm, and the Sea huſh and be ſtill; or a Roving Pyrate ceaſe his Purſuit, becauſe the Ship and its Cargo are the Property of its Owners? Do not theſe and ſuch like Inſtances effectually convince you, That God's Providence is your beſt Inſurance? Can any Power, leſs than his, preſerve you from that Violence and Treachery, thoſe Calamities and Dangers with which your Wealth is ſurrounded?

Think ſeriouſly upon it, and you will then confeſs, It is your Intereſt as well as Duty, by Acts of Charity to ſecure the Divine Protection, which alone is able to preſerve your Eſtates. *Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preſerve him, and*

and keep him alive, and he ſhall be bleſſed upon the Earth; and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his Enemies, Pſal. 41. 1, 2.

2. *A Charitable Diſtribution is the beſt Expedient to Increaſe an Eſtate.*

This doubtleſs will ſeem a Paradox to the Covetous Worldling: Whoſe Infidelity will not ſuffer him to comprehend, how an Addition can be made to an Eſtate by ſubſtracting from it. For according to outward Senſe and Apprehenſion, he who ſhall ſeparate the *Tenth*, the *Twentieth*, or the *Thirtieth*, or any other Proportionable part of his Eſtate, and give it to the Poor; he muſt needs have ſo much leſs to Diſpoſe of in any other Inſtance. So much leſs for his *Family*; ſo much leſs for his *Pleaſures*; ſo much leſs for his *Friend*; ſo much leſs for any other Occaſion. How then can Charity to the Poor increaſe an Eſtate? F In-

Indeed to Senſual men, whoſe hope is in this Life, this may ſeem impoſſible; but it will appear very poſſible to him who Believeth. *Solomon* hath aſſured us, *There is that ſcattereth, and yet increaſeth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to Poverty. The liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat: and he that watereth ſhall be watered alſo himſelf*, Prov. 11. 24, 25. Upon which words, a Learned and Pious Prelate of our Church hath this Paraphraſe. 'You ſhall find here and there a 'man who Communicates readily 'and liberally to the neceſſities of 'others; and yet his Eſtate is ſo 'far from being impaired thereby, 'that it increaſeth. When others, 'who are ſo ſaving that they 'will part with nothing, no not 'upon the moſt juſt occaſions, do 'not thrive at all, but by one 'means or other become Beg-'gars. Let not him therefore

'that

'that beſtows benefits, imagine 'thereby he ſhall be impoveriſh-'ed; for it is the certain way 'to inrich himſelf: And the lar-'ger his Charity is, and the more 'diffuſed for the refreſhment of 'others, the greater abundance 'ſhall be poured on him, and the 'abler ſtill ſhall he grow to do 'more Good. For *he that gi-veth unto the Poor, ſhall not lack, Prov.* 28. 27. i. e. 'He that re-'lieves thoſe that are in Want, 'ſhall be ſo far from wanting 'himſelf, that he ſhall thereby 'procure God's bleſſing to in-'creaſe his Eſtate. And the rea-ſon of this increaſe is given, *Prov.* 19. 17. *He that hath pity upon the Poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, will he pay him again.* i e. He will repay him with Intereſt and Advantage.

And therefore, as the Apoſtle admoniſheth, *Let us not be weary*

in well doing : for in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not, *Gal.* 6. 9. i. e. Be not diſcouraged, though you do not preſently find the effects of your Charity, by an increaſe of your Eſtate, for in God's due time your Liberality ſhall be rewarded. But then you muſt *not faint* ; you muſt *not be weary in well doing* ; you muſt not ſuſpect the truth of God's Promiſes ; but muſt patiently wait his time for the fulfilling of them.

3. *Charity will Bleſs and Sanctify an Eſtate.* i. e. A charitable Diſtribution of a Proportionable Part of our Eſtates, will qualify us to enjoy the reſt with Satisfaction and Comfort.

Give Alms, and behold all things are clean unto you, Luke 11. 41. Alms are the Firſt-fruits of our Eſtates, and as ſuch are the Lord's Property. Which being duly offered to the Lord, will

Sanctify

Sanctify all the reſt of our Eſtates, and give a reliſh to all our Enjoyments. But if we withhold this Portion from the Poor (to whom the Lord hath commanded it to be given) it will pollute and prophane all our Eſtate; and it will render the fruition of it ſowre and unſavoury to us. *The Bleſſing of the Lord maketh rich, and he addeth no ſorrow with it*, *Prov.* 10. 22. There are many ways and methods to be made Rich; but when an Eſtate is procured, by the Bleſſing of God upon our lawful endeavours; and is moderately uſed, and Charitably Diſtributed; ſuch an Eſtate is enjoyed without anxious Thoughts, and perplexing Cares. *Therefore I command thee, ſaying, Thou ſhalt open thine hand wide unto thy Brother, to thy Poor and to thy Needy, in thy land.--- Becauſe that for this thing the Lord thy God ſhall bleſs thee in all thy*

works, and in all that thou putteſt thine hand unto, Deut. 15. 10...11,

He ſhall Bleſs thee, not only by giving thee good ſucceſs in all thy lawful and prudent Undertakings; but *he ſhall Bleſs thee*, in a comfortable enjoyment of all thy Portion.

I have now briefly ſuggeſted, How, or in what manner Charity ſhall be rewarded in this Life. It will 1. *Preſerve*. 2. *Increaſe*. 3. *Sanctify an Eſtate*. But

II. The higheſt and moſt preſſing Motive to Charity, *is the comfortable Aſſurance, that it ſhall be rewarded in the Life to come.*

This is the hope and expectation of all good Chriſtians. And if this will not make the *Vile Perſon to be liberal*, and the *Churle to be bountiful* (in the Prophet's language, *Iſaiah* 32. 5.) If this will not open both the Hand and Heart of the moſt GrippleWretch,

I am

I am then diſcouraged from any further enlargement. But I much hope, what I am now to ſay will not be rejected: But may, through God's Bleſſing, be effectual and convincing.

And *Firſt*, I muſt deſire you to conſider, O ye Great and Wealthy Men, that you are frail and mortal as well as others. That after a very ſhort time your thread will be ſpun out. And then (as an Excellent Perſon doth admoniſh you) 'You ſhall be rifled, and quite ſtript of all; you ſhall *be laid out* ſtark naked, as when you came into the World; you ſhall not carry with you one grain of your gliſtering Metals, or one rag of your gaudy Stuff. Your ſtately Houſes, your fine Gardens, and your ſpacious Walks, muſt all be exchanged for a cloſe Hole under ground; you muſt for ever bid farewel to your Pomps and Magnificences; to

'your Feaſts and Jollities; to 'your Sports and Paſtimes. Not 'one of all your numerous and 'ſplendid Retinue, no Compani- 'on of your Pleaſures, no Admi- 'rer of your Fortune, no Flat- 'terer of your Vices can wait up- 'on you: But deſolate and unat- 'tended you muſt go down in- 'to the Chambers of Darkneſs. '*V. Barrow*'s Bounty to the Poor, '*p.* 160.

Being thus convinced that you muſt certainly Die; the next Thought is to conſider (and it is a weighty Thought) Whither are you going, when you leave this World? Into what unknown Regions is your next remove? And then, ſince Perſons of your Figure do love to be well treated, 'tis methodical to enquire, What kind of Entertainment are you then to expect? What Preparations have you made for your Reception there? In your Progreſs

greſs or Journey, you give notice of your approach to ſuch or ſuch a place; and ſend your Harbingers before, to make Proviſion for you, that ſo you may be received with Decency, and according to your Quality.

Let us now examine, Whether you are as wiſe for the Life to come, as you are for this.

We are all Strangers in this World, and *have here no continuing City*: But as Pilgrims and Sojourners are Travelling to *a better Countrey*. Now thoſe who Travel into Foreign Parts, do either ſend ſome *Effects* before them, or elſe do carry along with them *Bills* of *Credit*, which they take up in the Coin or Commodities of thoſe Countries, as they have occaſion. Indeed in this World, *Money anſwereth all things*. But there is ſomething elſe which *anſwereth all things*

things in the next. *viz.* Alms and Charitable Distributions. These are our Exchange for the other World, and the *Bills* and Effects we are to send before us. These (in the Traders Language) are such Bills, as *will certainly be accepted.* Or (in Scripture Phrase) *shall be recompensed at the Resurrection of the Just.* By thus giving Alms, you *provide your selves Bags which wax not old; a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no Thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth,* Luk. 12. 33. By this faithful usage of the *Mammon of unrighteousness, you make your selves friends, that when ye fail* (when you Die, and leave your Earthly Wealth) *will receive you* (will cause you to be received) *into everlasting Habitations.*

For when the Dead shall be raised (to express my self in the moving Rhetorick of a Learned Prelate

Prelate) *and all the inumerable Myriads that ever were born, ſhall ſtand before the dreadful Tribunal; then ſhall thoſe that have been relieved by the merciful man, appear as ſo many Interceſſors for him.* As if they ſhould ſay; *Lord, this is the Man that refreſhed our Bowels when we were pinched with Hunger; that came in ſeaſonably to ſupport us when we were ready to periſh; that delivered us from the hand of our cruel Oppreſſor; that had pity on our Children, and gave them good Education when they were left poor, diſtreſſed, fatherleſs Infants.* V. Biſhop Chicheſter's *Profitable Charity*, p. 20. O! what reviving Raptures will it then raiſe, to hear their Saviour and their Judge to make this Reply; *In as much as ye did it to the leaſt of theſe my Brethren, ye have done it unto me. Come therefore ye Bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom pre-*

prepared for you, from the foundation of the world.

This is the Bleſſed Reward of a well Regulated Charity. And God grant that by *doing Good*; by being *rich in good Works*; by being *ready to diſtribute*, and *willing to Communicate* to the neceſſities of Others; you may *lay up in ſtore for your ſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, and may lay hold on Eternal Life.*

I much hope, that you are now fully convinced of the neceſſity of this Duty. The Precepts of Charity are ſo plain, and ſo often repeated in the H. Scriptures; ſo preſſingly inforced by ſuch juſt and reaſonable Conſiderations, that the moſt tenacious Wretch muſt needs be convinced in his Judgment, that it is both his Intereſt and his Duty, *To be Charitable and do Good.*

But

But notwithſtanding all this, or whatever elſe can be ſaid on this Subject; if either the Suggeſtions of Satan (who envies the happineſs of Mankind), or the clamours of diſatisfied Relations (who like Vultures wait for their Prey) I ſay, if either of theſe can divert the Covetous Miſer from doing Good, they will not fail to furniſh him with ſuch *Pleas* and *Excuſes* as theſe.

PLEA I.

This preſſing of Charity is a Popiſh Trick. How many brave Eſtates have been ruined, by the wheedling Arts of theſe Canting Prieſts? What ſtately Lordſhips have been bequeathed to the Superſtitious uſes of Obits *and* Maſſes *for the Dead? And being rid of this Trumpery, muſt the Clergy of the Reformation be ſtill practiſing upon us? Shall not our Friends Diſ-*

Dispose of their Estates and make their Wills as they please, but these Men in Black must pretend to Direct, and bring in their Items for the Poor, and the Church?

ANSWER.

To the great Honour of the Reformation we can boldly declare, that Charity is no Popish Trick; for if a just Account of such Endowments were published to the World (as 'tis hoped in due time it may) it would undeniably appear, That as to the best parts of Publick Charity (*viz.* founding *Schools* and *Hospitals*, &c.) more hath been done by *Protestants* since the Days of *Edw. 6.* than by *Papists* from the Conquest to the Reformation.

But why must Charity be branded as Popish? Indeed formerly,

merly, *Popiſh* was a frightful Word, and of large extent in theſe Nations. The Reformed Service of our Church hath been condemned as Popiſh. Biſhops and their Lands have been Voted Popiſh (for whilſt *Naboth* hath a Vineyard, he ſhall not be innocent) and whatever elſe hath diſpleaſed, hath been nicknamed *Popiſh*.

But the Cheat is long ſince detected, and the Generality of our People are now better inſtructed; for they plainly underſtand, That what *Papiſts* formerly did out of a miſtaken Zeal, and Superſtitious Principles, *Proteſtants* may now perform in a due and regular manner; and ſo the Objection is vaniſhed, and the Proteſtant Clergy may ſtill do their Duty in preſſing Charity, without the harſh and unjuſt Cenſure of being Popiſhly affected.

PLEA

PLEA II.

The Laws of the Land have taken care of the Poor: and if duly executed would competently provide for them. To what purpoſe therefore do you Exhort us to be Charitable to the Poor, when we are forced, upon Complaint, to relieve them whether we will or no?

ANSWER.

1. If theſe Laws are not Executed (as many times they are not) the Poor will ſtill want relief: and may ſtarve with the Law on their ſide.

2. There are many Caſes of Charity, for which the Laws have not provided. Men of generous Spirits will even ſink in their miſery, and endure the utmoſt extremity, before they will make known their Wants to their inſulting

ſulting Neighbours, or be relieved by a Pariſh. Theſe are proper Objects for the Charity of Wealthy Men, who beſides the Payment of their Pariſh Rates, ſhould be conſtantly doing Good in ſuch inſtances as theſe. For true Chriſtian Charity is of a large extent, beyond the Obligation of humane Laws; and therefore, when at the great and dreadful Day, it ſhall be demanded of thoſe Rich and Wealthy Men, *Whether they have fed the hungry, and cloathed the naked?* &c. it will be a very imperfect and uncomfortable Anſwer only to Reply, *That they paid their Rates to the Poor.*

PLEA III.

My Eſtate, as yet, is but ſmall; when I am as rich as other Men, I may then think of Diſtributing, and being Charitable to the Poor.

ANSWER.

How ſmall is your Eſtate? Perhaps you are not worth *Fifty Thouſand Pounds*; you do not ride in your *Coach and Six*, nor eat in *Plate*. If this be your notion of a ſmall Eſtate, your Eſtate perhaps is not only ſmall at preſent, but ever ſhall be.

But not to Rally your Ambition, nor expoſe your impertinent Notion of being Rich; if your Eſtate is but ſmall, your Charity may be ſmall likewiſe: *For if there be firſt a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not*, 2 Cor. 8. 12. The Widow's Mite, becauſe chearfully offered, was better accepted than the Rich Mens Abundance.

PLEA

PLEA IV.

My Eſtate indeed is Competent; but I have Wife and Children and a Family to provide for; I have Debts and Encumbrances upon my Eſtate; and till theſe Expectations are anſwered, I have little left for Charity.

ANSWER.

1. True Chriſtian Charity doth not exclude Acts of Juſtice (ſuch as theſe now mentioned) but ſuppoſe them: 'Tis therefore your Duty to provide for your Wife and Children, 1 *Tim.* 5. 8. But how muſt theſe be provided for? Not according to your Projecting Ambition, or their extravagant Expectations, but according to more ſober and prudent Meaſures; provide ſo for them as to encourage their Induſtry, that they may live decently according to your preſent Rank and Quality, and may be enabled to maintain your Character, when they fill

your Place, and enjoy your Eſtate; beyond this do not concern your Self for them. *They that will be Rich* (i. e. they who reſolve, and make it their chief deſign, to be Rich) *they fall into temptation and a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, which drown men in deſtruction and perdition*, 1 Tim. 6. 9. Be ſo wiſe therefore,

2. To provide for your Self as well as your Family; and do not hazard an Immortal Soul; nor make your ſelf, not only a Drudge in this World, but eternally miſerable in the next; to raiſe them to a Grandeur, which ſhall only inſtruct them to deſpiſe your Meanneſs, and (by making Proviſion for the fleſh) the more artificially to ruin themſelves.

What is ſuggeſted concerning Debts and Encumbrances is a very uncertain pretence; ſince many men who are in Debt may be

out of it when they pleaſe. Great Purchaſers and great Dealers, who graſp at all, are ſeldom out of Debt; and if ſuch men muſt be excuſed from Charity till they have paid their Debts, the *Poor* and the *Publick* will be little better for them. But 'tis the Duty of the Clergy,

3. To admoniſh ſuch Men, That they are obliged to be juſt to God, as well as their Creditors. They who talk ſo much of paying their Debts (as if that might excuſe them from giving to the Poor) let them firſt take care to pay their Debts to God, in Charitable Diſtributions; which I thus prove to be their Duty. When God gave them their Eſtates (either by Deſcent from others, or their own Induſtry) he reſerved to himſelf a *Chief-Rent* (a proportionable Part of their Incomes) which he commands them to give, as occaſion ſhall require,

to the Publick, and to the Poor; and will they not be juſt to God, their great Landlord, as well as to their leſſer Creditors? Will they not pay God his own? Let them know therefore, if they refuſe their Chief Rent of Charity, they have forfeited their Eſtates, and God may take the Seiſure *When* and *How* he pleaſeth.

PLEA V.

I am inclined to give to the Poor, but there are ſo many Objects of Charity, that I know not where to begin, nor when to end; ſhould I give to every one who asketh, I might ſoon ſquander away my whole Eſtate, and perhaps have little thanks for ſo doing; for theſe begging People are ſo rude and cenſorious, that though I may have given, in former inſtances, even beyond my Ability, yet if I do not give likewiſe to them, I

ſhall

ſhall be clamoured and railed at, as if I had given nothing at all.

ANSWER.

Your Charity (as all other Paſſages of your Life) muſt be regular, and governed by Prudence. Otherwiſe, in this as well as other Chriſtian Duties, you may *offer the Sacrifice of Fools. A Good man ſheweth favour, and lendeth; he will guide his Affairs with Diſcretion,* Pſal. 112. 5. You muſt not therefore pretend to give at large, to every one that asketh; no nor to every one that wanteth. For there is no law of God or Man that doth oblige you to impoveriſh your Self and Family by relieving of Others.

And therefore, that you may neither be wanting to the Poor, nor to your Self, give me leave to propoſe this following Method.

Having taken a true Eſtimate of the Value and Circumſtances of your Incomes, then ſettle a a *Charity-Fund: By Separating and Dedicating ſome proportionable Part of your Eſtate to Charitable Uſes.* This Method is plainly ſuggeſted, if not commanded by St. *Paul*, 1 Cor. 16. 1, 2. *Now concerning the Collection for the Saints, as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even ſo do ye. Upon the firſt day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in ſtore, as God hath proſpered him.* What Proportion you are to ſeparate (or, in the Apoſtle's Language, *lay by you in ſtore*) whether a *Tenth*, a *Twentieth*, a *Thirtieth*, or a *Fortieth*, &c. I muſt not pretend to Determine: For St. *Paul* hath left you to your liberty, with this general Caution, *To do as God ſhall proſper you.*

Thoſe who have large Eſtates, and no Children to provide for; that

that are not clog'd with Debts, nor ſuch like Encumbrances, they are obliged to Dedicate the more; but of thoſe who have many Children to provide for, and are preſſed with Debts and other Encumbrances, God will doubtleſs accept the leſs. Let *every man according as he purpoſeth in his heart* (and according as his Circumſtances will permit) *ſo let him give; not grudgingly, or of neceſſity: for God loveth a chearful giver*, 2 Cor. 9. 7.

By this Expedient of a *Fund*, or *Poor-Man's Box* (which is heartily commended to you) your Charity will be *ready* and *chearful*, as well as *Regular* and *Prudent*.

And becauſe Examples are more intelligible than Precepts, and do uſually make the firmer impreſſion: I ſhall therefore repeat this following Paſſage, of Mr. *William Whately*, ſometime Vicar of *Banbury* (a famous Preacher

Preacher) who, upon occaſion, thus Addreſſed himſelf to his friend: *You know, Sir, ſome years ſince I was often beholding to you for the Lone of* 10 l. *at a time; The truth is, I could not bring the Year about, though my Receipts were not deſpicable, and I was not at all conſcious to my Self of any vain Expences, or of Improvidence: At length I began to examine my Family what relief was given to the Poor; and although I was aſſured that was not done nigardly, yet I could not be ſo ſatisfied, but reſolved inſtantly to lay aſide every Tenth ſhilling of all my Receipts for Charitable Uſes. And (to let you ſee how well I have thrived this way in a ſhort time) now, if you have occaſion to uſe an* 100 l. *or more, I have it ready for you.* V. Append. to Mr. *Mede*'s Life, p. 37.

The ſame (as to the Dedication of a *Tenth* Part) is reported of the *Lord Harrington*, Dr. *H. Hammond*,

mond, Mr. *Joſeph Mede*, Mr. *John Parker*, with ſeveral others.

PLEA VI.

Pray do not ſuſpect my Charity, but have a little Patience with me: Give me leave to enjoy my Eſtate whilſt I live, and thoſe who beſt deſerve it ſhall have it when I die. Amongſt other Items *in my Will, there is* ſo much *left to the Poor; and this I hope may excuſe me from any further Importunities.*

ANSWER.

Though it ſeems you are reſolved to part with nothing whilſt you live, but *to keep the Staff in your own hand*, as you phraſe it; yet you fairly promiſe to do ſome good at your Death. And thus far, 'tis well, for *better late than never*; but let me be ſo faithful to

to my Office to remind you, That the Charity you intend at your Death, muſt not excuſe you from being Charitable in your Life-time; for, to give you a true State of the Caſe, 'tis with Charity as with Repentance.

You muſt repent at your Death: For, Repentance, as well as other Graces, muſt be exerciſed upon your *Death-Bed.* But 'tis much hoped you do not then begin to Repent: For, a Death-Bed Repentance is neither comfortable nor ſafe. Repentance then is the work of your whole Life: For Daily Sins muſt have Daily Repentance. However, though there will be occaſion for Repentance all your life long, yet when you come to Die, you then reviſe and finiſh your Repentance, *i.e.* you then exerciſe theſe Penitential Acts with all the vigor that you can, and moſt earneſtly beg pardon for your imperfect Repentance. And

And thus it is with Charity.

You ought indeed to be Charitable at your Death (whereby you may ſupply your former Defects, and may ſtill be doing Good when you are removed into another World) but this Death-Bed or Teſtamentary Charity doth not exclude, but ſuppoſe the Charity of your precedingLife. *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men,* Gal. 6. 10. Now this Expreſſion, *As we have opportunity*, denotes *Two* Things:

1. *Life* and *Time* to do Good.

2. *Wealth* and *Power* to do Good: And both theſe may be wanting if you neglect the preſent ſeaſon.

1. You may reſolve to be very Charitable at your Death, by Bequeathing ſuch and ſuch Legacies to the Poor; but either Death prevents you (and your Will is never made) or elſe you are diverted by the unſeaſonable cla-

clamours of others, who will be very importunate to diſcourage your Charity. But

2. Suppoſe you are fixt and firm in your Reſolution of doing Good at your Death, it may then poſſibly not be in your Power; for *Riches make themſelves Wings.* And the Wealth of an Age may be gone in a Moment. For (to omit Modern Inſtances) he who this Day hath the Wealth of *Job*, may to Morrow need his Patience: And therefore, *Withhold not Good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it*, Prov. 3. 27.

PLEA VII.

I have both Ability and Inclination to be Charitable: But am troubled to obſerve, How Gifts and Legacies are abuſed, and how often the Intentions of Pious Donors are Perverted. AN-

ANSWER.

That this may not diſcourage your Charity, pleaſe to Conſider, That there is nothing fixt and certain in this World; and if you dare not be Charitable, becauſe your Gift may be abuſed, for the ſame reaſon you muſt neither Purchaſe nor Bargain, becauſe you may be cheated.

Uſe therefore the beſt Caution, and take the beſt Advice you can; and when you have ſo done, leave the Succeſs to God And then, though the Wickedneſs of others ſhould pervert your Charity, yet God, who is faithful, will Reward your good intention.

And the better to avoid Abuſes; *Finiſh your Charity in your Life, and depend not too much upon Executors and Truſtees.* But leſt you ſhould not Perſonally ſettle your Charity in your Life, make choice

choice of ſuch Executors as are of Ability as well as Integrity: and (in Modern Language) who are Reſponſible as well as Honeſt.

And if your Charity is not ſo large as to raiſe a Foundation of your Own, there are then ſeveral eminent Foundations, in this Kingdom, upon which you may ſafely Superſtruct, and ſecurely place your Charity, without the leaſt hazard of its being perverted, *viz.* The *Colledges* and *Halls* in our *Two* famous Univerſities, **Oxford** and **Cambridge**. The Five noted *Hoſpitals* in **London** and **Southwark**, viz *Chriſt*'s-**Hoſpital**, St. *Bartholomew*'s-**Hoſpital**, St. *Thomas*'s-**Hoſpital**, *Bridewel*-**Hoſpital**, *Bethlem*-**Hoſpital**.

Beſides theſe, there is another late Foundation, which (becauſe as yet not ſo generally known) I ſhall more largely deſcribe; and with a moſt Affectionate Concern thus Commend to your Charity.

All

ALL thoſe Honourable and Worthy Perſons, who are inclined to Dedicate and Bequeath ſome part of their Eſtates to Charitable Uſes; They are moſt humbly Petitioned, To *Remember Poor Widows and Children of* **Clergymen.**

And the better to promote ſo Pious a Work, it was thought fit here to Publiſh,

An Abſtract *of the* CHARTER *Granted by his late Majeſty, King* Charles the II. (of ever Bleſſed Memory) *for Erecting a* CORPORATION *for Relief of Poor Widows and Children of* CLERGYMEN. *Dated* July *1ſt.* 1678.

HIS *ſaid late* MAJESTY *having taken notice, That divers Charitable Perſons had ap-*

peared very forward in contributing to the relief of ſuch of the Widows and Children of Loyal *and* Orthodox Clergymen *as were poor, and of the good effect the ſame hath had; and taking into his Princely Conſideration the great Sufferings of many of the Clergy in* England *for their Loyalty: Was graciouſly pleaſed by his Charter, under the Great Seal of* England, *to Ordain, Conſtitute, and Grant, That the Perſons therein named, and their Succeſſors, (to be elected as is therein expreſſed)* Be one Body Politic and Corporate, by the name of, The Governors of the Charity for Relief of poor Widows and Children of Clergymen: *And that by the ſame name they ſhould have perpetual Succeſſion, and be capable to purchaſe, have, or take Mannors, Lands, and Hereditaments,* &c. *not exceeding the yearly value of Two thouſand Pounds;*

and

and all manner of Goods and Chattels, and to diſpoſe thereof: And by that Name to Plead, and to be Impleaded in All Actions, &c. *And to act all other Matters and Things as fully as any other Body Politick in this Realm can do: And that the ſaid Governors ſhould have one Common-Seal.*

And his ſaid late Majeſty did further Grant to the ſaid Governors, That There ſhould be a Preſident, a Vice Preſident, three Treaſurers, and forty two Aſſiſtants, Members of the ſaid Corporation, and that they, or any five of them, (whereof the Preſident, Vice-Preſident, or one of the Treaſurers to be one) ſhould be called The Court of Aſſiſtants *of the ſaid Corporation, who ſhould have the management of all the Affairs of the ſaid Coporation, and ſhould make Laws and Ordinantes for the*

good Government thereof, as well in Matters concerning the Corporation, as in electing of Officers, and Management of their Revenues; and impoſe Penalties on Offenders againſt the ſaid Laws, and recover the ſame to the uſe of the ſaid Corporation.

And therein it is appointed that the perſons thereby Conſtituted to be the firſt Preſident, Vice-Preſident, Treaſurers, and firſt Aſſiſtants, ſhould continue in their reſpective places until the ſecond Thurſday *in* November, 1679. *And from thenceforth, until there ſhould be a new Choice made of perſons to ſucceed them.*

And that on every ſecond Thurſday *in* November *for ever (or oftner if there be occaſion) there ſhould be a General Aſſembly of the ſaid Governors, and the Major part of the Members then preſent*

ſent might chuſe a Preſident, Vice-Preſident, three Treaſurers, and forty two Aſſiſtants, who ſhould continue for the Year following: And that in caſe of the death of any of the ſaid Officers within the Year, others might be choſen at a General Aſſembly into their places.

And that ſuch General Aſſembly might Elect ſuch other perſon or perſons to be Members and Governors of the ſaid Corporation, as they, or the greater part of them ſhall think fit.

Provided, That the Preſident, Vice-Preſident, and Treaſurers above-named, ſhould before they enter upon their Places, take their Oaths before the Lord Chancellor, faithfully to execute their Reſpective Truſts: And that all other the Members of the ſaid Corporation before they act as Aſſiſtants, and

all ſucceeding Preſidents, Vice-Preſidents, Treaſurers, Aſſiſtants, and all other their inferior Officers ſhould take the like Oath before the Perſons by the ſaid Charter impowr'd to adminiſter the ſame.

And that the Lord Archbiſhop of Canterbury, Lord High-Chancellor of England, Lord Archbiſhop of York, or Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England, Lord High-Treaſurer, Lord Biſhop of London, Lord Almoner, and the Lord Mayor of London, *for the time being, ſhould be the Viſitors of the ſaid Corporation, and ſettle all differences about the Government thereof, and touching the diſpoſition of their Revenues.*

Having

HAving thus publiſh'd this great favour of his late Majeſty, here are next ſet down the Forms of Subſcriptions; and alſo how any Legacy in Money, or Houſes and Land, may be given by WILL to the ſaid Corporation.

I *of* *do promiſe to pay to the Governors of the Charity for Relief of poor Widows, and Children of Clergymen, the Sum of* *Sterling, on or before the*

Witneſs my Hand

I of do *promiſe to pay to the Governors of the Charity, for Relief of poor Widows, and Children of Clergymen, the Sum of* Sterling, *at the two uſual Feaſt days of the* Annunciation *of the Bleſſed Virgin* Mary, *and St.* Michael *the Archangel, by equal Portions during*

The firſt payment to be made at the next of the Feaſt Days above-mentioned, that ſhall happen after the Date hereof.

Witneſs my Hand

This may be inſerted among *LEGACIES* in a WILL.

ITem, *I give and bequeath unto the Governors of the Charity;*

rity, for Relief of poor Widows, and Children of Clergymen, the Sum of Pounds, to be paid to one of the Treaſurers.

For deviſing *HOUSES* or *LANDS.*

ITem, *I give and deviſe unto the Governors of the Charity, for Relief of poor Widows, and Children of Clergymen, and their Succeſſors for ever, all that my Meſſuage and Lands Situate and being in*

IT is thought fit and requisite to give notice; That the Governors of this Charity (by the assistance of many worthy persons, who have bountifully contributed thereunto, and whose names are Registred as Benefactors:) Have not only made some Purchases as a Yearly Fond, but also distributed considerable Sums amongst poor Widows, and Children of Clergymen. And also several poor Children are Yearly placed forth Apprentices, by the Direction and Encouragement of the Stewards. It is therefore much hoped, That considerable Subscriptions will still be made, Gifts and Legacies bequeathed in all parts of this Kingdom: Such a certain Method and Security being Established for the due Administration of this Charity, so that nothing can be diverted to any other use.

All Persons who shall please to promote this Charity, or have any thing

thing to communicate concerning the ſame ; may direct Letters, as occaſion ſhall require, to Mr. Thomas Tyllot, *the Regiſter of the Corporation, at* Doctors Commons, LONDON.

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